

Sammie Phillips did not return with them. At Sammie's funeral at the Stithton Baptist Church in Radcliff, 3,000 people turned out to pay their respects to the boy with the big smile. Sammie's mother, Rachel Crutcher, wrote a letter to her son that said:

I know you're in heaven saying, "Momma, don't cry."

Rachel says:

He was someone special, and I knew . . . that he'd be an inspiration to everyone he came in contact with.

Madam President, our prayers are for the Phillips family for their terrible loss. We are thinking of Sammie's wife, Ashley Phillips; his mother, Rachel Crutcher; his stepfather, Donny Crutcher; his father, Ronald Phillips; his sister, Cassandra Phillips; his brother, Logan Crutcher; his grandfather, Ted Stiles; and many more beloved family members and friends.

Madam President, Ashley tells us that her Sammie was proud of his service. He told his mom that if he were to die while wearing his country's uniform, "everyone was going to know who he was."

Well, this U.S. Senate knows, and we certainly will not forget PFC Sammie E. Phillips's service and sacrifice. We honor the life of this dedicated man, soldier, and patriot, and stand in awe of devotion like his that continues to keep our Nation safe and free.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

PARTICIPATING IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, we have a very busy week ahead of us. I have announced some of the work we are going to do, but we really do have a lot to do. I look forward to this being a very productive week. I hope things work out as well as I anticipate.

Madam President—I am sorry that I referred to you as "Mr. President." That is pretty standard when you just have—as I mentioned last week, we sure have a lot more women than when I first came here. When I came here, we had Senator MIKULSKI. Now, on this side alone, we have 11 Democratic women, which has made the Senate a much better place.

Madam President, as Senators OBAMA, REED, and HAGEL travel through Iraq today, there is one conclusion they will undoubtedly all reach: our troops—about 150,000 strong—have done a remarkable, heroic job under nearly impossible circumstances.

This war has been going on for a long time—more than 6 years—approaching about \$1 trillion having been spent. Today, we are spending \$5,000 a second in Iraq. We have more than 3,000 double-amputees. We have a significant number of returning veterans who are blind, paralyzed, and, of course, the

traumatic head injuries they have had have been significant. It will be a legacy of this country for a long time to pay for all that. But because of the valor of these troops and their sacrifice, a war that was irresponsibly planned and incompetently waged by President Bush has now shown signs of improvement, and that is good. Neither Democrats nor Republicans can take any credit for that. Every ounce of credit goes to our men and women in uniform, and we are grateful to them beyond words to describe.

It would be impossible to fully repay our troops for the sacrifice they and their families have made. But this Congress took a historic step forward—over the President's objection and over Senator MCCAIN's statement that the bill was too generous—and we passed, in spite of MCCAIN's objection and the President's objection, a new GI bill of rights—the largest expansion of veterans' benefits since the original GI bill after World War II.

As Senator OBAMA visits Iraq to listen to our troops and commanders and meet with Iraqi leaders, it is becoming clear that America, Iraq, and the world are coalescing around Senator OBAMA's plan to end the war.

I spoke yesterday to someone I know very well. He has had three tours of duty in Iraq.

I said: James, what do you think of Senator OBAMA going to Iraq?

He said: The troops love him.

For someone who has had three tours of duty in Iraq, I think he has the credentials to say that.

That plan sets a responsible timeline for redeploying American combat brigades, transitions the responsibility for securing Iraq to the Iraqis—as Senator LEVIN has said for many years: Take the training wheels off and let them run their own country. It restores America's military readiness. Right now, because of this long war, our military is in very difficult shape. Estimates of bringing the military to what it was before the war started is now approaching at least \$150 billion. Finally, it takes the fight to America's No. 1 enemy, Osama bin Laden.

This weekend, Prime Minister Al-Maliki spoke in favor of the Obama plan. Today, despite pressure from the White House, Iraqi Government officials publicly reiterated their support. They want us out of their country. If you take a poll—and there have been many taken—80 percent of the Iraqis want us out of that country. They have suffered significantly during this war.

We are all glad Saddam Hussein is gone. But they do not know definitely the number of Iraqis who have been killed. There are wide-ranging estimates from 150,000 to 600,000. We know that millions have been displaced. There are 2 million out of the country. There are a million and a half wandering around inside of Iraq who are displaced.

The American people have known for years that our national security inter-

ests require us to carefully bring our troops home and call on the Iraqi people to take the reins of their own sovereign nation. The vast majority of Iraqis, I repeat, are eager for the day to come when they control their own destiny. They are ready for the war to responsibly draw to a close.

Even President Bush—even President Bush—who bears the primary responsibility for this incompetently managed war, is now belatedly and gradually moving toward some elements of key Democratic positions on Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The President has labeled his new position for Iraq a "time horizon." Try to figure out what that means. We don't know. But at least he is recognizing there must be some timeline set. No one knows yet what a "time horizon" actually means, and it is clear that President Bush has no plans to draw down the war before he packs his bags in January. This critical national security decision will fall to the next President.

While it is becoming increasingly clear that the American people and Iraqi leaders strongly support the Obama plan to bring our troops home, Senator MCCAIN is stubbornly clinging to his open-ended commitment to endless war.

Senator MCCAIN has called upon Senator OBAMA to listen to our troops and commanders in Iraq. He criticizes Senator OBAMA for not going to Iraq again. And he criticized Senator OBAMA for going to Iraq. Senator OBAMA is, though, listening to our troops and commanders, and it is clearer than ever that his position was right from the beginning.

Now it is time for Senator MCCAIN to listen to the American people. If he does, he will discover a nation desperate for a responsible path out of Iraq. If Senator MCCAIN fails to join the chorus of calls for a responsible path out of Iraq, the choice in November will be even more clear than it is now.

Madam President, I want to talk about energy speculation, about energy generally.

This weekend, Senator MURRAY delivered the weekly Democratic radio address. In her remarks, the Senator from Washington said that her last gas fill-up in the State of Washington was \$4.35 a gallon. Nevada is not far behind.

I have spoken on the floor about gas prices on countless occasions, and each time the crisis has grown worse. Last month, we heard from a public school teacher, who gave the Democratic response to President Bush, a teacher in Auburn, NY, who has had to spend all the money he and his wife used to save for their children's college tuition on gasoline. All across our country, billions and billions of dollars that rightfully belong in the pockets and savings of American families are being funneled instead to oil companies and oil-producing countries. That diversion of savings from American families to foreign governments and oil companies is nothing short of a national crisis.